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Fragment of the Month: September 2009

T-S Misc.7.140: an early copy of the *Guide*

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The Genizah is blessed with numerous manuscripts containing parts of Moses Maimonides' *Dalālāt al-Ḥā'irīn*, the *Guide for the Perplexed*. What distinguishes the present fragment, which is the very end of the *Guide*, from many others is that it seems to be a very early copy. Judging by the handwriting it was probably written no later than the early thirteenth century, so it may even have been made while Maimonides was still alive. Does its proximity to the time of composition give it a greater reliability than more recent recensions of the work?

The fragment contains several minor differences from the printed edition that scholars use today; these are tabulated below. In a few of these cases the principal scholarly version (Munk 1931) corrects some non-standard uses of Arabic and alters the plene spelling of biblical quotations. One of the differences might attest to a calque in the published version, although it is difficult to be certain. The phrase על ידי appearing in the manuscript seems to be an instance of the Hebrew expression, while in the published version it appears as the Arabic على يد (used in the same sense as the Hebrew). On the verso, the first textual difference seems to be for the purpose of clarification. The fragment has the Arabic term *faṣl*, 'section, part, chapter', which is quite ambiguous. In the published version the change to Hebrew *pasūq* shows that the reference is to the biblical verse quoted rather than the chapter as a whole.

Finally, the phrase $\mu\alpha$ is missing from before the closing poem. Likewise, the final statement of completion is absent, but it could have been on another page.

A major difference that would considerably alter the meaning of the text is $\alpha\lambda\gamma\iota\alpha\tau$, where τ appears in place of μ ; this changes the meaning of the word from *gāya*, 'goal,' to *juz*, 'part'. While it is possible to make sense of the manuscript reading, I think that Munk's version presents the more likely reading: the earliest manuscripts are not always the most reliable!

Line 10: יעני for line 18: יעני

Line 15: מהמלה' for line 23: מהמול

Line 16: עלי for line 24: על

Line 16: סיד for line 24: סייד

Verso

Line 4: אלפסוק for line 3: אלפצל

Line 7: הו for line 5: הי

Line 8: דאימא for line 6: דאימה

Line 13: אלתאמל for line 9: אלתאמר

Line 14: תעלי for line 10: Ø

Line 15: תפתחנה for line 12: תשמע

Line 16: בארץ for line 13: הא(רץ)

Line 17: נגה for line 13: נוגה

ם (Defus 'Azri'el: Jerusalem, 1931). וקטעים מכתב ידו של הרמב"ם

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